



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Agenda Item No: 4.4

North Cambridgeshire Training Centre Infrastructure Funding

To: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Board

Meeting Date: 27 July 2022

Public report: Yes

Lead Member: Mayor Dr Nik Johnson

From: Steve Cox, Associate Director

Alan Downton, Deputy Chief Officer Business Board and Senior Responsible Officer, Growth Works

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: n/a

Recommendations: The Combined Authority Board is recommended to:

- a) Approve the Business Case for North Cambridgeshire Training Centre additional Infrastructure works and approve £347,000 Grant from the Transforming Cities Fund.
- b) Note formal commitment by project Lead to increase outputs by at least 10% across all learners using the centre per year until 2030 secured by a revised grant funding agreement.
- c) Seek a financial contribution from Metalcraft towards the infrastructure costs.

Voting arrangements: A simple majority of all Members present and voting

To be carried, the vote must include the vote of the Mayor, or the Deputy Mayor when acting in place of the Mayor.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To seek approval for Business Case and approve grant funding allocation of £347,000 from the Transforming Cities Fund subject to that budget releasing any underspends. The Business Case can be found within the appendices of this report.
- 1.2 To enable a critical access off the A141 junction in Chatteris, which has an infrastructure safety issue presenting a risk to the opening of the new North Cambridgeshire Training Centre in Chatteris.
- 1.3 If approved the project is ready to move at pace into the delivery phase. Monitoring and evaluation will commence throughout the delivery of this phase of project, in parallel with the existing project monitoring and evaluation.

2. Background

- 2.1 The new Training Centre has been funded from local growth fund which was originally awarded by the Business Board to Stainless Metalcraft Limited in January 2020 (£3.16m grant). The centre construction is complete. However, as a result of detailed S278 (Highway) discussions the infrastructure requirements to enable the Centre to open have now been established with the Highway Authority. Access off the A141 junction requires more enhanced works than was originally envisaged. As the original funding bid was submitted prior to seeking detailed advice from the Highway Authority, the amount bid for was insufficient. An additional £347k is required to deliver the infrastructure requirements.
- 2.2 The Centre is not able to open until the infrastructure works have been completed and any delay to its opening will delay the achievements of the outcomes expected from the original LGF business case.
- 2.3 The new vocational training centre is being delivered to meet the needs of local community and local businesses plus reach across wider north Cambridgeshire area in support of businesses to address the lack of training facilities for apprentices. Once operational the centre is planned to deliver between 100 and 130 Apprenticeships per year, employ 14 new teaching and support staff, plus create 30 local indirect jobs in support of the centre.
- 2.4 The facility is planned to be used for upskilling of existing personnel and retraining across multiple skill sectors and will include conference and meeting space. It will also be complementary to other existing facilities across Cambridgeshire plus incorporate space for initial R&D capability and will provide a local support hub for Advanced Manufacturing businesses, particularly those based around the Fens.
- 2.5 The training centre is phase one of a wider site development that will also facilitate initial infrastructure to open the site for vehicular, cycle and pedestrian access to serve the training centre, provide future access to a new development parcel to secure the development potential for later Phases 2 and 3 to fully unlock the potential of the wider site (totalling 11 ha).
- 2.6 The original project plan hoped that minimal works would be required to enable access to the site as a result of the development, with the utilisation of the existing roundabout. Once the project team had engaged with CCC Highways post planning consent, the requirement to modify the roundabout became apparent and a design was established to satisfy the

CCC Highways accessibility and safety requirements at the roundabout. The full upgrade of the roundabout was required because in its current form it is not to an acceptable standard and there is no alternative compromise or partial works that addresses the speed safety issue whilst delivering the upgrade to this primary road substandard junction.

- 2.9 The project manager has worked hard to develop a contingency within the original LGF funding which was initially thought would be able to cover the costs and, whilst not ideal to be in this position with the building completed, this would enable the roundabout modification to be covered. Once they received a quotation from their contractor it was clear additional funding would be required. Metalcraft's original contractor was replaced, and a final design was agreed with Metalcraft's new contractor on which the current costings and bid for additional funding is based.
- 2.15 Options on finding the shortfall of funds has been discussed at length with Stainless Metalcraft Limited and they have considered all options internally and externally to raise the funds needed. Whilst they have not been able to secure the full amount of shortfall, they have secured a commitment from their parent group company of additional contingency funding of 10% of the overall grant just to support unforeseen new costs with the roundabout works once started. If this new extra contingency funding is not fully utilised towards the roundabout, then it will transfer to the training centre to buy additional training equipment for the students.
- 2.16 The Transforming Cities Fund is a good fit with this additional transport enhancement project given it will deliver a safer and more usable junction off this key route not only for the students and visitors using the centre but also Fenland residents.
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3. Funding Proposal and Case for Support

- 3.1 The Applicant is seeking a grant to cover additional infrastructure works as required to enable opening of access off the A141 to the North Cambridge Training Centre as soon as possible. It is not likely to be completed in time for the intake of students in September 2022.
- 3.2 The Applicant and their appointed Education Provider have committed through this business case development that with the approval of the additional grant they will agree to an increase on all outputs based on original funding agreement of at least 10% across all learners.
- They are committing to increase the levels of delivery to include:
- new higher level 4 and 5 Apprenticeships and qualifications,
 - to expand the range of qualifications being delivered to include Leadership & Management,
 - to deliver courses for 500 Adult learners from across Fenland and adjoining Huntingdonshire
 - plus provide additional commercial training which demand generation is currently showing Fenland companies are seeking.

List of additional training outputs is listed in the business case attached to this paper at Appendix 1.

- 3.3 The additional commitment to increased outputs for the centre will be secured through

revision of the original grant funding agreement which will also take account of this additional funding award, if agreed, and the detailed works plan being delivered.

- 3.4 The transport enhancements required for this project are not unprecedented, it is consistent with previous, follow-on asks from project investments that the CPCA has made at industrial sites, Lancaster Way is the main example. There continues to be a strong additional strategic case for investing in skills development in Fenland given the significant gap in level 3 and level 4 attainment in Fenland compared to other parts of the Combined Authority area.
- 3.5 The business and skills team has committed to review the processes involved in working with partners to bring forward capital projects of this nature. In particular, it will review how best to ensure that full capital costs, including transport costs, are established as early as possible and included in the business case that is used as evidence to support the bid. The case for the scheme remains strong, despite the cost increase, and the commitment by the company to increase outputs by 10% reinforces that case.

Significant Implications

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 The allocation of £347,000 funding is subject to release of unspent budget from within the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF).
- 4.2 While the review of the TCF programme is still ongoing, which will identify where there are savings and underspends which require new projects to be substituted into the programme, this is not due to be completed and reported to the Combined Authority Board until August and waiting for this would result in the training centre being unable to accept students for the start of the academic year in September.
- 4.3 While the Combined Authority Board are therefore allocating TCF which is not yet confirmed as available, the Soham Station project is anticipating delivery of a saving of at least £1m, which would release more than sufficient TCF to fund this proposal, thus the risk to the Combined Authority is considered minimal.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Any funding award would be legally covered by standard Combined Authority funding agreement.

6. Public Health Implications

- 6.1 The delivery of the scheme will have a positive impact on public health through the improvement to the local environment, enabling a free flow of traffic through this key roundabout, providing a safer junction and access for the new training centre.

7. Environmental and Climate Change Implications

- 7.1 The delivery of the scheme will have a positive impact on the local environment through the delivery of place-improvement transport enhancement measures.

8. Other Significant Implications

8.1 There are no other significant implications

9. Appendices

9.1 Appendix 1 – North Cambridgeshire Training Centre Access Infrastructure Business Case

10. Background Papers

10.1 [Business Board 27 January 2020 - Local Growth Fund Project Proposals](#)

10.2 [Combined Authority Board - For Approval as Accountable Body - Local Growth Fund Project Proposals](#)